

Legal Help

Do you need help with any of the following?

- the Code of Practice and how it applies to your child
- your child's Statement of Special Educational Need
- preparing for a Tribunal in order to contest what your LEA have planned for your child

Are you having difficulties with your LEA

- arranging specialist provision for your child?
- refusing or delaying to take the necessary steps for your child?
- not implementing the full recommendations of the Statement of SEN?

First obtain a copy of The SEN Code of Practice. This is the publication that sets out the Identification, Assessment, Provision, Statutory Assessment and Statementing procedures as followed by LEAs, Head Teachers, Governors and professionals published by the DfES.

For a free copy, telephone DfES Publications on 0845 602 2260, order online at www.dfes.gov.uk or download from http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/_doc/3724/SENCodeOfPractice.pdf.

Then contact the following organisations for free help and advice:

Your local **Parent Partnership Service** is a statutory service that offers impartial information, advice and support for parents of children and young people with special educational needs. To find your local office look at their website: www.parentpartnership.org.uk

Parents in Wales should go to SNAP Cymru at
Web: www.snapcymru.org.

SEN Mediation

Parents/carers of children with SEN can find themselves in conflict with their LEA or their child's school, often an informal approach is more effective - this is what SEN disagreement resolution offers. Find your local service at
Web: www.sendist.gov.uk/Parents/mediation.htm

Or ask your Parent Partnership Officer for details.

Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

ACE offers free advice and support to parents on SEN issues in England and Wales including exclusion and bullying. They publish many helpful handbooks including the ACE Special Educational Handbook; Tribunal Toolkit: Going to the SEN Tribunal; Appealing for a School; Getting Extra Help and various Summaries of the Law and examples of letters to write.

Text: AskACE to 68808

Helpline (10am to 5pm): 0808 8005793

Exclusion Information Line: (24 hour answer phone) 020 7704 9822

Web: www.ace-ed.org.uk

Asset

Offer information on the legal process and practise when a parent has a legal right of appeal against SENDIST, have links with other professional and legal experts & have a good knowledge regarding all aspects SEN.

Web: www.asset-gb.org

Children's Legal Centre

An independent charity has The Education Law Advice Unit which provides free legal advice and representation to children and/or parents with issues relating to schools and LEAs, including SEN, exclusions, admissions, bullying and disability discrimination.

Web: www.childrenslegalcentre.com

Email: clc@essex.ac.uk **Tel:** 01206 877910

Disability Law Service

Small charity organisation providing free confidential legal advice to disabled people, their carers, enablers and other organisations. Areas of law include: further and higher education, employment, disability discrimination, community care and welfare benefits.

Web: www.dls.org.uk **Email:** advice@dls.org.uk

Tel: (Mon- Fri 10-1 and 2-5pm) 020 7791 9800

IPSEA: the Independent Panel for Special Education Advice

Advice Line: Tel: 0800 018 4016

SEN and Tribunal Appeals or claims

A registered charity with trained volunteers providing advice on LEAs' legal duties towards children with SEN. It offers free and independent advice for parents of children with SEN who disagree with an LEA's assessment of their child and offers free representation at the Special Needs tribunal. Their website offers model letters and information on exclusion rights.

Web: www.ipsea.org.uk

Tel: 0845 602 9579 (Mon,Weds,Thurs 10am to 1pm)

ISEA (Scotland)

Provides free, independent advice, information and support to parents who have a child/young person with additional support needs, including advice on assessments, placements, appeals, etc.

Web: www.isea.org.uk

Advice Line: 0131 454 0096

National Autistic Society

Advocacy for Education Service and Tribunal Support Scheme supports parents and carers and provides accurate information on educational provision and entitlements.

Web: www.nas.org.uk

Tel: 0845 070 4004

Network 81

A network of parents working towards properly resourced inclusive education for children with SEN. They have befrienders, trained in Code of Practice and Education Law, who can support parents at meetings and through the assessment procedures, and helpful publications.

Web: www.network81.org

Email: info@network81.org

National Helpline: 0870 770 4055

SENAC (Special Educational Needs Advice Centre)

The Northern Ireland advice line service for Information on the ELBs duty towards children with SEN, especially assessments & statementing issues. Also assistance for parents appealing to SENDIST.

Email: info@senac.co.uk

Website: www.senac.co.uk

Advice Line: 028 9079 5779

SOSISEN

An independent national helpline based in Twickenham for SEN issues staffed by volunteers knowledgeable in education and related services, concentrating on helping people find their way through the legal and procedural maze which is so daunting.

Email: sossen@blueyonder.co.uk

Tel: 020 8538 3731

SENDIST (Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal)

They are independent of central and local government; they hear and decide parents' appeals against LEA decisions on SEN. For further information visit their website.

Discrimination helpline: 0870 606 5750

SEN Helpline: 0870 241 2555

Web: www.sendist.gov.uk

SNIP (in Scotland)

Provide advice and information on services available to children with additional support needs and their carers and can advice on Education Law in Scotland. (Also provide 'a listening ear').

Website: www.snipinfo.org

Email: snip@btinternet.com

Helpline Tel: 0131 536 0583

The following may also have some advice or answers for you:

British Dyslexia Association

Web: www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

Tel: 0845 251 9002

Contact a Family

Contact a Family's Fact sheet Special Educational Needs – England, a complete guide to the SEN system from start to finish.

Web: www.cafamily.org.uk/educatio.html

Tel: 0800 808 3555

Some useful books:

1. "Special Educational Needs (SEN): A guide for parents and carers".

Publisher: DfES. This can be downloaded at www.teachernet.gov.uk/wholeschool/sen/parentcarers and is available in other languages.

2. "Special Education Handbook" (9th Ed). Advisory

Centre for Education (ACE). Practical advice on meetings with schools, examining a statement, disability rights, choosing a school, taking an appeal or complaint through the system. £17.99 + p&p. Credit card order - **Tel:** 020 7704 3370 or visit their Website at www.ace-ed.org.uk.

3. "Surviving the special educational needs system – How to be a velvet bulldozer"

Author: Sandy Row, an adoptive parent of 4 siblings who between them have autism, ADHD, dyspraxia and auditory processing problems. Tells her story of misdiagnoses; a long search for help; the SEN system including assessments, appeals and tribunals etc. Available from Jessica Kingsley Publishers www.jkp.com priced £13.95 + p & p. Tel: 020 7833 2307.

4. "Appealing for a Special School" Free guide written by Douglas Silas, solicitor specialising in education law. You can download it from his website www.douglassilassolicitors.co.uk once you've registered some basic details or call 08707 433377

Legal firms

You may need to use a firm of solicitors. All will charge full professional fees for their services; so ask about their fee structure before you get too involved. Most will offer a short consultation with you first, free of charge, to assess the situation. (Parents on income support can apply for Legal Help in some cases but check with your solicitor). The following specialise in Education Law including Statementing, Appeals and Tribunals, breaches of statutory duty and negligence, bullying and exclusions. OAASIS cannot recommend any personally and this list is not comprehensive:

Mr Yogi Amin Irwin Mitchell (Sheffield, Newcastle and others)

Web: www.irwinmitchell.com

Tel: 0114 274 4642

Mr Chris Barnett Levene Solicitors (London, Birmingham)

Web: www.levenes.co.uk

Tel: 0800 11 88 99

Mr Mike Charles Sinclairs Solicitors (Penarth) (Eng & Wales)

Web: www.sinclairslaw.co.uk

Tel: 02920 706444

Ms Lucy Conn Ridley & Hall (Huddersfield)

Web: www.ridleyhall.co.uk

Tel: 01484 538421

Ms T Eldridge-Himmers Ormerods Solicitors

Web: www.ormerods.co.uk

Tel: 020 8686 5000

Mr Michael Imperato Russell Jones and Walker (Cardiff)

Tel: 029 2026 2811

Web: www.rjw.co.uk

Mr Richard Lemasurier Parker Bullen (Salisbury)

Web: www.parkerbullen.com

Tel: 01722 412000

Mr Robert Love Langley Wellington (Gloucester)

Web: www.langleywellington.co.uk

Tel: 01452 521286

Ms Elaine Maxwell Maxwell Gillott (Lancaster)

Web: www.maxwellgillott.com

Tel: 01524 596080

Mr Felix Moss Felix Moss (London)

Web: www.felixmoss.co.uk

Tel: 07950 730844



www.cambianeducation.com

Cambian is the largest provider of specialist residential education and care for young people with Autism, Asperger Syndrome and other associated complex needs in the United Kingdom. Cambian is trusted by hundreds of parents and over 70 Local Education Authorities

OAASIS publications

- SEN Information Sheets
- First Guide to ...
- Cards explaining 9 learning disabilities
- Legal advice Information Sheets
- SEN 'How to' guides

All OAASIS publications can be downloaded from www.oaasis.co.uk

Helpline 0800 902 0732 www.oaasis.co.uk

Ms Melinda Nettleton SEN Legal (Bury St Edmunds)

Web: www.senlegal.co.uk

Tel: 01284 723952

Ms Sarah Palmer The Children's Legal Practice Ltd (Fareham)

Web: www.childrenslegalpractice.com

Tel: 01329 823322

Mr John Peake Southwestlaw (Bristol)

Web: www.southwestlaw.org.uk

Tel: 0117 314 6401

Mr Jack Rabinowicz Teacher, Stern (Holborn)

Web: www.teacherstern.com

Tel: 020 7242 3191

Mr Douglas Silas Douglas Silas Solicitors

Web: www.specialeducationalneeds.co.uk

Tel: 08707 433377

Mr Phil Storey Bailey, Wright & Co Solicitors (Birmingham)

Web: www.baileywright.com

Tel: 0121 270 1566

Ms Beverley Watkins Watkins Solicitors (Bristol) (undertake Legal Aid Wk)

Tel: 0117 939 0350

Email: Beverley.watkins@watkinssolicitors.co.uk

Ms Eleanor Wright Fisher Meredith (London)

Web: www.fishermeredith.co.uk

Tel: 020 7091 2700

Community Legal Advice

Web: www.clsdirect.org.uk

Helpline: 0845 345 4345

Free advice if you are eligible for Legal Aid. Downloadable information sheets about any legal problem. They have a telephone helpline and lots of information on their website. Search for a solicitor or legal adviser close to you by entering your postcode and category you need help with.

There are 8 Law Centres that help parents who are on low incomes and eligible for Community Legal Service - contact OAASIS for your nearest one. We also hold lists of other solicitors (taken from CLS Direct) who offer 'specialist help' in education and those who do work funded by the Legal Services Commission.

Financial help - helping parents to organise their own financial affairs on behalf of their child, or their child's own finances:

Blake Laphorn Solicitors (Hampshire - ask for Rachel Brooks).

Tel: 02392 221122

Mencap offers free legal advice from their in-house solicitor in relation to making wills, reviewing your personal affairs and setting up trusts to protect your child; a range of literature and lists of specialist solicitors.

Tel: 0207 696 5533 (ask for Aarti Puri); or

Email: Aarti.Puri@mencap.org.uk.

The NAS Legacy Department has information on their website about legacies and a booklet called 'Guide to wills and trusts' which includes information on leaving money in your will to a person with autism to ensure they are best looked after. They have a list of solicitors in different parts of the country that can help with writing wills to ensure your wishes are carried out.

Web: www.nas.org.uk

Email: legacies@nas.org.uk

Tel: 020 7923 5796

Tel: 020 7923 5796

Everyday Life Ltd "The Way Forward" – Financial Appointee

Advocacy Service. This service offers Financial Advocates who act as a fully legal Appointee for people who lack the capacity to maintain their own finances and require a legal system of accountability. Advocates can set up and manage all bank accounts, apply for benefits and receive them, liaise with benefit/housing agencies, etc. There is a charge for the service.

Web: www.everydaylife-advocacy.org

Tel: 01733 327888

Trouble with the law

Young adults with Asperger Syndrome may find themselves in trouble with the police or in court. The NAS produces information to assist criminal justice professionals to understand their needs which can be found on their website.

Web: <http://www.nas.org.uk/nas/jsp/polopoly.jsp?d=471>

Dennis Debbaudt has an American website giving advice and information to individuals with autism on avoiding trouble and also for criminal justice professionals on dealing appropriately with autistic people.

Web: www.autismriskmanagement.com

Expert Witness on Asperger Syndrome and other ASDs – specialising in criminal cases where the defendant or witness has ASD. Find one at **Web:** <http://www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/expertwitness.cfm> National

Appropriate Adult Network: Tel: 020 8378 273

Young people who are considered to be mentally vulnerable must have an 'appropriate adult' with them when they are interviewed by the police. This network can put you in touch with a scheme providing them.

Web: www.appropriateadult.org.uk



Cambian is the largest provider of specialist residential education and care for young people with Autism, Asperger Syndrome and other associated complex needs in the United Kingdom. Cambian is trusted by hundreds of parents and over 70 Local Education Authorities

www.cambianeducation.com

OASIS publications

- SEN Information Sheets
- First Guide to ...
- Cards explaining 9 learning disabilities
- Legal advice Information Sheets
- SEN 'How to' guides

All OASIS publications can be downloaded from www.oasis.co.uk